

Inaugural Dissertation
on
Asclepias Syriaca
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Introduction

Many motives led to the selection of the following vegetable, as the subject of an inaugural dissertation.

Its claim to attention has not entirely escaped observation, although no strict or correct investigation of its medical properties has been hitherto made, nor any regular application of it, as far as I know, to the cure of disease.* From analogy, however, or from a vulgar and irregular use of the *Solipias Syriaca*, it has been supposed, and found to possess qualities active and powerful. The introduction of a new remedy capable of effecting the cure of any disease of common occurrence, is certainly a valuable addition to the Materia Medica; but how much more valuable is the acquisition, when the medicine is the production of every part of our own soil, and applicable to the removal of many common, and often obstinate diseases? The universality of its growth in our own country, is an advantage that few other medical vegetables so eminently enjoy, and one by no means inconsiderable.

* See Dyckman's Edition. Edinburgh Dispensatory

Introduction

The first part of the book is devoted to a general
survey of the subject, and to a description of the
various methods which have been employed for
the purpose of determining the true nature of the
phenomena. In the second part, the author
presents a detailed account of the experiments
which have been made, and of the results which
have been obtained. In the third part, the
author discusses the various theories which have
been proposed to explain the phenomena, and
presents his own views on the subject. In the
fourth part, the author discusses the various
applications of the principles which have been
derived from the study of the phenomena, and
presents his own views on the subject. In the
fifth part, the author discusses the various
methods which have been employed for the
purpose of determining the true nature of the
phenomena, and presents his own views on the
subject. In the sixth part, the author discusses
the various theories which have been proposed to
explain the phenomena, and presents his own
views on the subject. In the seventh part, the
author discusses the various applications of the
principles which have been derived from the
study of the phenomena, and presents his own
views on the subject. In the eighth part, the
author discusses the various methods which have
been employed for the purpose of determining the
true nature of the phenomena, and presents his
own views on the subject. In the ninth part, the
author discusses the various theories which have
been proposed to explain the phenomena, and
presents his own views on the subject. In the
tenth part, the author discusses the various
applications of the principles which have been
derived from the study of the phenomena, and
presents his own views on the subject.

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whether we consider the cost or the facility in obtaining our remedies, the latter of which is always a consideration of the utmost importance in the restoration of a patient's health, and often in the preservation of his life. The objections of this sort it is not necessary to make, since a single reflection on the great necessity of the immediate action of an emetic or other medicine, in cases where an inordinate portion of narcotic or poisonous drugs have been taken into the stomach, sufficiently demonstrates the necessity of the position.

The objections made against the addition of new medicines to the old catalogue of remedies, are by no means fewer nor inconsiderable. But they, like every thing else, have their proper boundaries, beyond which they cannot pass without becoming unworthy of refutation.

We desire with exact precision all the qualities that an article should possess in order to be barely admissible, will not perhaps be found easy of accomplishment; yet as a general rule, none should attract notice, which have not the power either of repelling or preventing

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disease, or of aiding others, by making the prescriptions more promptly and completely accomplish the object of their administration. On the other hand, we are most deliberately of opinion, that an article which has demonstrated the power, either of curing, or preventing disease, or that has afforded others given for this purpose, should most readily be received as a new means of defending the system against the attack, or ravage, of disease. Whether this will be universally admitted as being correct or not, it is not easy to determine; for many medical characters whose talents, and professional qualifications, at defiance the shaft of envy or jealousy, have repeatedly declared, that no new remedies were wanting for a malady, which one had so generally cured as to have received in relation to it, the appellation of a specific, as mercury in *Syphilis*, and bark in intermittent fever. With every practitioner of any respectable pretensions to experience, these received specifics have not infrequently failed of their reputed success, and thus afforded incontestable proof of the necessity of

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eating in other, which though not perhaps so immediately efficacious, yet are not only advantageously resorted to, but found adequate as auxiliaries to the restoration of health.

Attention is particularly directed to that part of these preliminary observations, as it is believed a correction has been observed in relation to the present subject, which, if strictly adhered to in future investigations of it, must prove conclusive.

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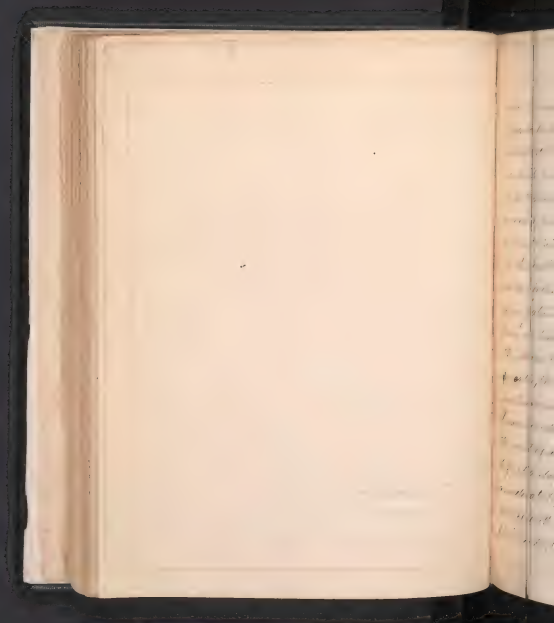


The first thing I saw when I stepped
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The first of these is the fact that the
 world is not a uniform whole, but is
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 The second is the fact that the world is
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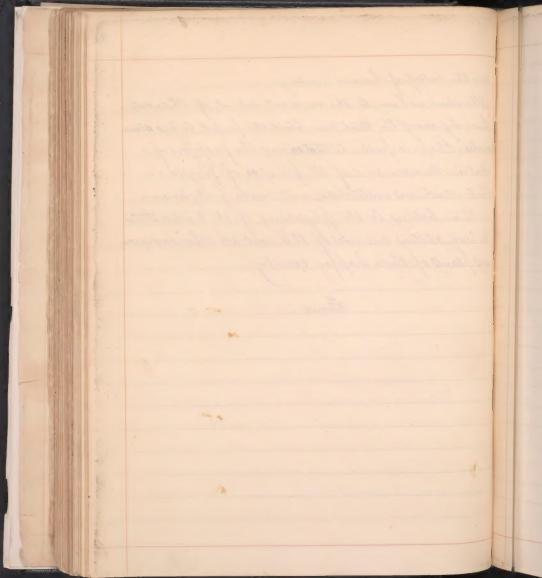
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and the relief of human misery.

Attached as I am to the medical school of Philadelphia, by every tie that can bind the pupil to his alma mater, I hope, in particular, that among the professors of Materia Medica, and of the practice of Physic in that illustrious institution, will make fully known in their lectures to the physicians of the United States the real virtues and uses of this, and all other indigenous plants of their happy country.

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